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Recent Publications

Contemporary Aesthetics does not publish book reviews. However, to inform our readers of new publications of interest, we do publish brief descriptions extracted from information provided by the publishers. These notices do not necessarily represent the views or judgment of this journal. Readers are invited to send us such information about books they think will interest other readers of *CA*.

Einav Katan-Schmid, *Embodied Philosophy in Dance; Gaga and Ohad Naharin's Movement Research* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 228 pp.
ISBN 9781137601858

Representing the first comprehensive analysis of Gaga and Ohad Naharin's aesthetic approach, this book follows the sensual and mental emphases of the movement research practiced by dancers of the Batsheva Dance Company. Considering the body as a means of expression, *Embodied Philosophy in Dance* deciphers forms of meaning in dance as a medium for perception and realization within the body. In doing so, the book addresses embodied philosophies of mind, hermeneutics, pragmatism, and social theories in order to illuminate the perceptual experience of dancing. It also reveals the interconnections between physical and mental processes of reasoning and explores the nature of physical intelligence.

Mark Lewis, *Im/Possible Films*, François Bovier & Hamid Taieb, eds. (MētisPresses, 2016), 122 pp.
ISBN 9782940406517

Mark Lewis works at the boundaries of the white cube and the black box, exploring the limits and the potentialities of cinema. He investigates, for example, standardized film conventions such as credits, end sequences and scenes between actions, as well as elementary film devices, including camera movements, zooms, and pans. Starting from a deconstructionist perspective, Lewis has developed his own formal language reminiscent of early cinema in a post-conceptual age.

This volume includes a portfolio by Mark Lewis, an interview with the artist, and a series of essays which draw on tools forged in fields of art history, philosophy and film studies. The publication gives access, on the internet, to a selection of films by Mark Lewis representative of his wide-ranging and conceptual approach, from his first "impossible" films to his later "possible" works.

Harry Underwood, *The Experience of Beauty: Seven Essays and a Dialogue* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press,

2016), 184 pp.
ISBN 9780773548015

The notion of beauty as a point of transit between the sensuous and the ideal is well-established in the history of Western philosophy. Describing this transition and seeking to rethink the ways in which humans understand the things they find beautiful in life, *The Experience of Beauty* approaches the notion of beauty through the insights of major but distinctly different philosophers and artists. The author considers the principal instances of beauty as it reveals itself in everyday experience, as a concept in the mind of the philosopher, as the artist's vision, and as the shining image of the ideal. A meditation on the mystery of beauty, this collection of essays contends that beauty serves life as an inspiration, not merely as an ornament.

Thomas E. Wartenberg, *Mel Bochner: Illustrating Philosophy* (University Press of New England, 2016), 28 pp.
ISBN 9780989083539

Thomas E. Wartenberg curated Mel Bochner's *Wittgenstien Illustrations* for the exhibition *Mel Bochner: Illustrating Philosophy*, July 21- December 20, 2015, at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum.

"Can works of philosophy be illustrated? What would a visual illustration of a philosophical idea look like? Take, for example, Plato's metaphysical claim that the objects possessing complete reality are not those we can perceive through the senses. Like many philosophical theses, isn't Plato's by its very nature something that cannot be given a visual representation? In fact, aren't philosophical ideas and theories, by virtue of their very abstractness, incapable of being rendered purely visually? These are some of the questions raised by Mel Bochner's project of illustrating the work of Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. (p. 11)

Like many works characterized as conceptual art, the ones by Bochner that were inspired by Wittgenstein make significant demands on the viewer, who cannot approach them passively, hoping to be drawn in by such traditional aesthetic properties as beauty. In this respect, as philosopher Arthur Danto noted, these works resemble Wittgenstein's philosophizing, which makes similar demands on the reader. Neither Bochner nor Wittgenstein presents a message explicitly, thereby sparing the audience the serious effort of decoding its meaning. Sustained study and attention are required to understand the achievements of both the artist and the philosopher." (pp. 11-12)

Theory Matters: The Place of Theory in Literary and Cultural Studies Today, Martin Middeke & Christoph Reinfandt, eds. (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 362 pp.
ISBN 9781137474278

Theory Matters attempts to demonstrate that theory in literary and cultural studies has moved beyond overarching master theories towards a greater awareness of particularity and contingency, including its own. What is the place of literary and cultural theory after the Age of Theory has ended?

Grouping its chapters into rubrics of metatheory, cultural theory, critical theory, and textual theory, this collection demonstrates that the practice of "doing theory" has neither lost its vitality, nor can it be in any way dispensable. Current directions covered include the renewed interest in phenomenology, the increased acknowledgement of the importance of media history for all cultural practices and formations, complexity studies, new narratology, literary ethics, cultural ecology, and an intensified interest in textual as well as cultural matter.

Colloquium: Sound Art and Music, eds. Thomas Gardner & Salomé Voegelin (Zero Books, 2016).

ISBN 9781782798958

In 2012, Thomas Gardner and Salomé Voegelin hosted a colloquium entitled "Music - Sound Art: Historical Continuum and Mimetic Fissures," at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. This colloquium dealt with the current debate concerning the relationship between sound art and music. This book proposes opening the colloquium to a wider readership through the publication of a decisive range of the material that defined the event.

A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics, translated and edited by Sheldon Pollock (Columbia University Press, 2016), 472 pp.
ISBN 9780231173902

From the early years of the Common Era to 1700, Indian intellectuals explored with unparalleled subtlety the place of emotion in art. Their investigations led to the deconstruction of art's formal structures and broader inquiries into the pleasure of tragic tales. *Rasa*, or taste, was the word they chose to describe art's aesthetic appeal, and their effort to pin down these phenomena became its own remarkable act of creation.

This book follows the evolution of *rasa* from its origins in dramaturgical thought—a concept for the stage—to its flourishing in literary thought—a concept for the page. *A Rasa Reader* incorporates primary texts by every significant thinker on classical Indian aesthetics, many never translated before. Headnotes explain the meaning and significance of each text, a comprehensive introduction summarizes major threads in intellectual-historical terms, and critical endnotes and an extensive bibliography add further depth to the selections. The

Sanskrit theory of emotion in art is one of the most sophisticated in the ancient world, a precursor of the work being done today by critics and philosophers of aesthetics. *A Rasa Reader's* conceptual detail, historical precision, and clarity will appeal to scholars interested in global intellectual development.

Agon Hamza, *Althusser and Pasolini: Philosophy, Marxism, and Film* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), 202 pp.
ISBN 978-1-137-56651-5

Althusser and Pasolini offers an in-depth analysis of the main thesis of Louis Althusser's philosophical enterprise alongside a dissection of Pier Paolo Pasolini's most important films. It claims that there is a philosophical, religious, and political relationship between Althusser's philosophy and Pier Paolo Pasolini's films, placing specific focus on critiques of ideology, religion, ideological state apparatuses, and the class struggle. The discussion, however, does not address Althusser and Pasolini alone but also draws on Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, and Žižek to complete the study. Althusser and Pasolini provides a creative reconstruction of Althusserian philosophy, as well as a novel examination of Pasolini's films from the perspective of the filmmaker's own thought and Althusser's theses.

Steve Choe, *Sovereign Violence: Ethics and South Korean Cinema in the New Millennium* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 326 pp.
ISBN 978 90 8964 638 5

South Korea is home to one of the most vibrant film industries in the world today, producing movies for a strong domestic market that are also drawing the attention of audiences worldwide. This book presents a comprehensive analysis of some of the most well-known and incendiary South Korean films of the millennial decade from eight major directors. Building his analysis on contemporary film theory and philosophy, as well as on interviews and other primary sources, the author makes a case that these often violent films pose urgent ethical dilemmas central to life in the age of neoliberal globalization.

Kimberly Mair, *Guerrilla Aesthetics: Art, Memory, and the West German Urban Guerrilla* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 384 pp.
ISBN 978-0-7735-4695-0

The violent operations performed in the 1970s by West German urban guerrillas, such as the Red Army Faction (RAF), were so vivid and incomprehensible that it seemed to be more urgent to produce spectacle than to be politically successful. *Guerrilla Aesthetics* challenges the assumption that these guerrillas sought to realize specific political goals. Instead, it tracks the guerrilla fighters' plunge into an avant-garde-inspired negativity that rejected rationality and provoked the state. Focusing on the Red Decade of 1967 to 1977, which was characterized not only by terrorism and police brutality

but also by counterculture aesthetics, Mair draws from archives, grey literatures, popular culture, art, and memorial and curatorial practices to explore the sensorial aspects of guerrilla communications performed by the RAF, as well as the 2nd of June Movement and the Socialist Patients' Collective. Turning to cultural and artistic responses to the decade and its legacy of raw public feelings, Mair also examines works by Eleanor Antin, Erin Cosgrove, Christoph Draeger, Bruce LaBruce, Gerhard Richter, and others. Reconsidering an enigmatic period in the history of terrorism, *Guerrilla Aesthetics* engages with the inherent connections between violence, performance, the senses, and memory.

Exposing the Film Apparatus: The Film Archive as a Research Laboratory, eds. Giovanna Fossati and Annie van den Oever (Amsterdam University Press, March 2016), 480 pp.
ISBN 978 90 8964 718 4

Film archives have long been dedicated to preserving movies, and in recent years they have been adapting to the changing formats and technologies through which cinema is now created and presented. This collection of essays makes the case for a further step: the need to see media technologies themselves as objects of conservation, restoration, presentation, and research in both film archives and film studies. Contributors with a wide range of expertise in the film and media world consider the practical and theoretical challenges posed by such conservation efforts and consider their potential to generate new possibilities in research and education in the field.

Wolfgang Ernst, *Sonic Time Machines: Explicit Sound, Sirenic Voices, and Implicit Sonicity* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 184 pp.
ISBN 9789089649492

Our studies of aesthetics and knowledge have long tended to privilege the visual, Wolfgang Ernst argues, at the expense of the aural. *Sonic Time Machines* aims to correct that, presenting a new approach to theorizing sound that investigates its split existence: as a temporal effect in a techno-cultural context and as a source of knowledge and information. Ernst creates a new term for the concept at the heart of the book, "sonicity," a flexible term that allows him to consider sound with all its many physical, philosophical, and cultural valences.

Cultural History of the Senses, ed. Constance Classen (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 6 volumes.
ISBN 9780857853387

What did the past sound like, taste like, smell like? How did it look and feel? How did people make sense of the world through their senses? These are questions that are increasingly capturing the interest of historians. *A Cultural History of the Senses* delves into the sensory foundations of Western civilization, taking a comprehensive period-by-period

approach, which provides a broad understanding of the life of the senses from antiquity to the modern day. Each volume contains a chapter on the senses in art, literature, media, religion, medicine, philosophy and science, the marketplace, the city and social life generally over a span of 2500 years.

Vol. 1 *A Cultural History of the Senses in Antiquity, 500 BCE-500 CE* edited by Jerry Toner (University of Cambridge, UK)

Vol. 2 *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages, 500-1450* edited by Richard Newhauser (Arizona State University, USA)

Vol. 3 *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance, 1450-1650* edited by Herman Roodenburg (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Vol. 4 *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Enlightenment, 1650-1800* edited by Anne Vila (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA)

Vol. 5 *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Empire, 1800-1920* edited by Constance Classen (McGill University, Canada)

Vol. 6 *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age, 1920-2000* edited by David Howes (Concordia University, Canada)

Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations through Dance, Yoga, and Touch, edited by Jondra Fraleigh (University of Illinois Press, 2015), 288 pp.
ISBN 978-0-252-03940-9

The popularity of yoga and Zen meditation has heightened awareness of somatic practices. Individuals develop the conscious embodiment central to somatics work via movement and dance or through touch from a skilled teacher or therapist often called a somatic bodyworker. Methods of touch and movement foster generative processes of consciousness in order to create a fluid interconnection between sensation, thought, movement, and expression. In *Moving Consciously*, Sondra Fraleigh gathers essays that probe ideas surrounding embodied knowledge and the conscious embodiment of movement and dance. Using a variety of perspectives on movement and dance somatics, Fraleigh and other contributors draw on scholarship and personal practice to participate in a multifaceted investigation of a thriving worldwide phenomenon. Their goal is to present the mental and physical health benefits of experiencing one's inner world through sensory awareness and movement integration. *Moving Consciously* incorporates concepts from East and West into a timely look at life-changing, intertwined practices that involve dance, movement, performance studies, and education.

Stephen Lee Naish, *Create or Die: Essays on the Artistry of Dennis Hopper* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 110 pp.
ISBN 978 90 8964 858 7

Dennis Hopper (1936-2010) was one of most charismatic and protean figures to emerge from the American independent film movement of the 1960s and '70s, a compelling screen presence who helped give cult classics like *Easy Rider* and *Blue Velvet* their off-kilter appeal. But his artistic interests went far beyond acting, and this collection of essays is the first major work to take in Hopper as a creative artist in all his fields of endeavor, from acting and directing to photography, sculpture, and expressionist painting. Stephen Naish doesn't skimp on covering Hopper's best-known work, but he breaks new ground in putting it in context with his other creative enterprises, showing how one medium informs another, and how they offer a portrait of an artist who was restless, even flawed at times, but always aiming to live up to his motto: create or die.

Bruce W. Wilshire, *The Much-at-Once: Music, Science, Ecstasy, The Body* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 275 pp.
ISBN 9780823268344

In *The Much-at-Once*, the late Bruce Wilshire seeks to rediscover the fullness of life in the world by way of a more complete activation of the body's potentials. Wilshire builds on James's concept of the much-at-once to name the superabundance of the world that surrounds, nourishes, holds, and stimulates us; that pummels and provokes us; that responds to our deepest need--to feel ecstatically real. Appealing to our powers of hearing and feeling, with a special emphasis on music, he engages a rich array of composers, writers, and thinkers ranging from Beethoven and Mahler to Emerson and William James.

Can Architecture Be an Emancipatory Project? Dialogues on Architecture and the Left, edited by Nadir Z. Lahiji (Zero Books, 2016), 216 pp.
ISBN 978-1782797371

Can architectural discourse rethink itself in terms of a radical emancipatory project? And if so, what would be the contours of such a discourse? These are the questions Lahiji asks of his interlocutors - Andreotti, Cunningham, Deamer, Swyngedouw and Ockman. *Can Architecture be an Emancipatory Project?* provides a platform to ask searching questions of architecture, the Left, and each other. The arguments and exchanges presented in this book cover issues of autonomy and activism, the relationship between the political and the economic, and form and abstraction.

Liam Gillick, *Industry and Intelligence- Contemporary Art since 1820* (Columbia University Press, 2016), 208 pp.
ISBN 9780234470208

The history of modern art is often told through aesthetic breakthroughs that sync well with cultural and political

change. From Courbet to Picasso, from Malevich to Warhol, it is accepted that art tracks the disruptions of industrialization, fascism, revolution, and war. Yet filtering the history of modern art only through catastrophic events cannot account for the subtle developments that lead to the profound confusion at the heart of contemporary art. Liam Gillick writes a genealogy to help us appreciate contemporary art's engagement with history even when it seems apathetic or blind to current events. Taking a broad view of artistic creation from 1820 to today, Gillick follows the response of artists to incremental developments in science, politics, and technology. The great innovations and dislocations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have their place in this timeline, but their traces are alternately amplified and diminished as Gillick moves through artistic reactions to liberalism, mass manufacturing, psychology, nuclear physics, automobiles, and a host of other advances. *Industry and Intelligence* ties the origins of contemporary art to the social and technological adjustments of modern life, which artists struggled to incorporate truthfully into their works.

Marta Jecu, *Architecture and the Virtual* (The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 176 pp.
ISBN 9781783201945

Architecture and the Virtual is a study of architecture as it is reflected in the work of seven contemporary artists working with the tools of our post-digital age. The book maps the convergence of virtual space and contemporary conceptual art and is an anthropological exploration of artists who deal with transformable space and work through analog means of image production. Marta Jecu builds her inquiry around interviews with artists and curators in order to explore how these works create the experience of the virtual in architecture. Performativity and neo-conceptualism play important roles in this process and in the efficiency with which these works act in the social space.

Charles Nussbaum & Ronald Millar, *Understanding Pornographic Fiction: Sex, Violence, and Self-Deception* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 187 pp.
ISBN 9781137556769

This work defends two main theses. First, modern Western pornographic fiction functions as a self-deceptive vehicle for sexual or blood-lustful arousal; and second, that its emergence owes as much to Puritan Protestantism and its inner- or this-worldly asceticism as does the emergence of modern rationalized capitalism.

Silvia Jonas, *Ineffability and its Metaphysics: The Unspeakable in Art, Religion, and Philosophy* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), 304 pp.
ISBN 978-1-137-57954-6

Can art, religion, or philosophy afford ineffable insights? If so, what are they? The idea of ineffability has puzzled

philosophers from Laozi to Wittgenstein. *Ineffability and its Metaphysics* examines different ways of thinking about what ineffable insights might involve metaphysically, and shows which of these are in fact incoherent. Jonas discusses the concepts of ineffable properties and objects, ineffable propositions, ineffable content, and ineffable knowledge, examining the metaphysical pitfalls involved in these concepts. Ultimately, she defends the idea that ineffable insights as found in aesthetic, religious, and philosophical contexts are best understood in terms of self-acquaintance, a particular kind of non-propositional knowledge. Ineffability as a philosophical topic is as old as the history of philosophy itself, but contributions to the exploration of ineffability have been sparse. The theory developed by Jonas aims to make the concept tangible and usable in many different philosophical contexts.

Patricia Pisters, *Filming for the Future: the Work of Louis van Gasteren* (Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 324 pp.
ISBN 978 94 6298 031 0

This is the first monograph on the work of one of the Netherlands' most prolific filmmakers spanning sixty years of cultural history, ranging from the Second World War to the rebellious sixties and eighties, from Dutch water management to modern architecture, and from Europe to global consciousness. This book presents a journey in the audio-visual and artistic sources in the world of a filmmaker who, over the last sixty years, always had his camera on standby. Pisters presents the most salient features of a wide-ranging and vital oeuvre that becomes more amazing and important as time goes by.

Esthétique de l'Environnement- Appréciation, Connaissance et Devoir, edited and translated by H.-S. Afeissa and Y. Lafolie (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2015), 366 pp.
ISBN 9782711626335

This new collection of well-known essays originally published in English on environmental aesthetics is the first to appear in French translation. It reflects a growing interest in that country in environmental aesthetics. A Preface introduces the work, which is grouped in three sections, each of which is preceded by an introduction: Foundational Texts (Hepburn, Carlson, and Berleant), Alternative Models (Carroll, Godlovitch, Saito, and Brady), and Ethical and Aesthetic Issues in Environment (Rolston, Hettinger).

Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 184 pp.
ISBN 9780231140973

Feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and Marxism, among other critical approaches have undermined traditional notions of aesthetics in recent decades. But questions of aesthetic judgment and pleasure persist, and many critics now

seek a "return to aesthetics" or a "return to beauty."

Janet Wolff advances a "postcritical" aesthetics grounded in shared values that are negotiated in the context of community. She relates this approach to contemporary debates about a committed politics similarly founded on the abandonment of certainty. Neither universalist nor relativist, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty* provides a discourse on beauty that contemporary critics can engage with and offers a basis for judgment that is committed to assigning value to works of art.

Wolff explores her position through a range of topics: the question of beauty in relation to feminist critique; the problematic status of twentieth-century English art, visual representations of the Holocaust, Jewish identity as portrayed by the artist R. B. Kitaj, refugee artists and modernism in 1940s Britain, and the nature and appeal of imagistic thinking in sociology. She addresses the desire for certainty and the timeliness of doubt, and concludes with a meditation on the intersection of aesthetics and ethics, arguing that ethical issues are very much implicated in aesthetic discourse.

Numbers and Nerves, eds. Scott Slovic & Paul Slovic
(Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 238 pp.
ISBN 9780870717765

Numbers and Nerves explores a wide range of psychological phenomena and communication strategies. These include fast and slow thinking, psychic numbing, pseudoinefficacy, the prominence effect, the asymmetry of trust, contextualized anecdotes, multifaceted mosaics of prose, and experimental digital compositions, among others, and it places these in real-world contexts. In the past two decades, cognitive science has increasingly come to understand that we, as a species, think best when we allow numbers and nerves, abstract information and experiential discourse, to work together. This book provides a roadmap to guide that collaboration.

Mauro Carbone, *The Flesh of Images: Merleau-Ponty between Painting and Cinema*, trans. Marta Nijhuis (Albany, NY: SUNY Press Books, 2015), 128 pp.
ISBN 978-1-4384-5879-3

In *The Flesh of Images*, Mauro Carbone begins with the point that Merleau-Ponty's often misunderstood notion of "flesh" was another way to signify what he also called "Visibility." Considering vision as creative *voyance*, in the visionary sense of creating as a particular presence something which, as such, had not been present before, Carbone proposes connections between Merleau-Ponty and Paul Gauguin, and articulates his own further development of the "new idea of light" that the French philosopher was beginning to elaborate at the time of his sudden death. Carbone connects these ideas to Merleau-Ponty's continuous interest in cinema—an interest that has been traditionally neglected or circumscribed. Focusing on Merleau-Ponty's later writings, including unpublished course notes and documents not yet available in English, Carbone demonstrates both that Merleau-Ponty's interest in film was

sustained and philosophically crucial, and also that his thinking provides an important resource for illuminating our contemporary relationship to images, with profound implications for the future of philosophy and aesthetics. Building on his earlier work on Marcel Proust and considering ongoing developments in optical and media technologies, Carbone adds his own philosophical insight into understanding the visual today.

Sonia Keravel, *Passeurs de Paysages: Le Projet de Paysage comme Art Relationnel* (MétisPresses, 2015), 144 pp. In French.
ISBN 978-2-94-0406-94-4

In environmental practices, the question of reception remains under-studied. Leaning on the analysis of several contemporary achievements, this work seeks to understand how landscape designers conceive their plans by anticipating the way they will be understood by future users. These analyses show that if the process of landscape design varies considerably; it is in every case an art that relates the landscape to its user in a relation of exchange of person and environment. In reconstructing the process of conceiving new projects, Keravel distinguishes between landscapes to be read that are founded on a narrative; and landscapes to be lived, where the visitor is in a state of immersion and where landscapes constantly evolving and invite the visitor's creative contribution.

Karl Rosenkranz, *Aesthetics of Ugliness: A Critical Edition*, trans. Andrei Pop & Mechtild Widrich (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 335 pp.
ISBN 978147258854

In this text, Karl Rosenkranz shows ugliness to be the negation of beauty without being reducible to evil, materiality, or other negative terms used in its conventional condemnation. This insistence on the specificity of ugliness, and on its dynamic status as a process afflicting aesthetic canons, reflects Rosenkranz's interest in the metropolis. Like Walter Benjamin, he wrote on Paris and Berlin, and possessed a voracious appetite for collecting caricature and popular prints. Living and teaching, like Kant, in remote Königsberg, Rosenkranz reflects on phenomena of modern urban life, from the sublime to the comic, at a distance that results in critical illumination. The struggle with modernization and idealist aesthetics makes *Aesthetics of Ugliness*, published four years before Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, relevant to modernist experiment as well as to the twenty-first century theoretical revival of beauty. *Aesthetics of Ugliness* reworks conceptual understandings of what it means for a thing to be ugly.

Cecilia Sjöholm, *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt: How to See Things* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 219 pp.
ISBN 9780231173087

Cecilia Sjöholm reads Hannah Arendt as a philosopher of the senses, grappling with questions of vision, hearing, and touch even in her political work. Constructing an Arendtian theory of aesthetics from the philosopher's fragmentary writings on art and perception, Sjöholm begins a new chapter in Arendt scholarship that expands her relevance for contemporary philosophers.

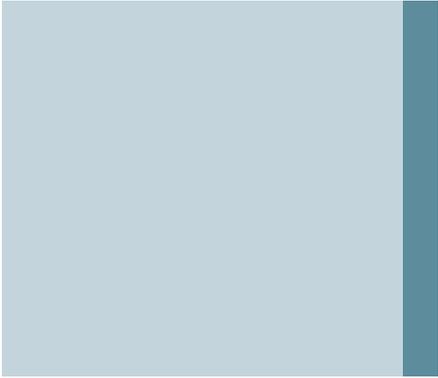
Arendt wrote thoughtfully about the role of sensibility and aesthetic judgment in political life and on the power of art to enrich human experience. Sjöholm draws a clear line from Arendt's consideration of these subjects to her reflections on aesthetic encounters and works of art mentioned in her published writings and stored among her memorabilia. This effort allows Sjöholm to revisit Arendt's political concepts of freedom, plurality, and judgment from an aesthetic point of view and to incorporate Arendt's insight into current discussions of literature, music, theater, and visual art. Though Arendt did not explicitly outline an aesthetics, Sjöholm's work substantively incorporates her perspective into contemporary reckonings with radical politics and their relationship to art.

Alva Noë, *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), 285 pp.
ISBN 9780809089178

What is art? Why does it matter to us? What does it tell us about ourselves? Normally, we look to works of art in order to answer these fundamental questions. But what if the objects themselves are not what matter? In *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature*, Alva Noë argues that our obsession with works of art has gotten in the way of understanding how art works on us.

For Noë, art isn't a phenomenon in need of an explanation but a mode of research, a method of investigating what makes us human--a strange tool. Art isn't just something to look at or listen to; it is a challenge, a dare to try to make sense of what it is all about. Art aims not for satisfaction but for confrontation, intervention, and subversion. Through diverse and provocative examples from the history of art-making, Noë reveals the transformative power of artistic production. By staging a dance, choreographers cast light on the way bodily movement organizes us. Painting goes beyond depiction and representation to call into question the role of pictures in our lives. Accordingly, we cannot reduce art to some natural aesthetic sense or trigger; recent efforts to frame questions of art in terms of neurobiology and evolutionary theory alone are doomed to fail. By engaging with art, we are able to study ourselves in profoundly novel ways. In fact, art and philosophy have much more in common than you might think.

Eva Kit Wah Man, *Issues of Contemporary Art and Aesthetics in Chinese Context* (Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2015), 103 pp.
ISBN 978-3-662-46509-7



This book discusses how China's transformations in the last century have shaped its arts and its philosophical aesthetics. How have political, economic and cultural changes shaped China's aesthetic developments? Further, how have China's long-standing beliefs and traditions clashed with modern desires and forces, and how have these changes materialized in art? In addition to answering these questions, this book brings Chinese philosophical concepts on aesthetics into dialogue with those of the West and contributes to the discussion in the fields of art, comparative aesthetics, and philosophy.